

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A print-on-demand method for creating and reproducing books by heterogeneous systems, said method comprising the steps of:
- 5 a) receiving as book files, a digital representation of a book targeted for reproduction;
- b) converting said book files to have a solution-independent, intermediate format;
- c) storing solution-independent, intermediate formatted book files along with
- 10 book identification information as a mastered book;
- d) converting solution-independent, intermediate formatted book files to solution-dependent formatted book files to match the needs of a book reproduction system; and
- e) reproducing said book from information comprised by said solution-dependent formatted book files.
- 15 2. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book in step a) is originally in the form of electronic files.
3. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book in step a) is originally in the form of a hard copy, and step a) further comprises the steps of:
- scanning the components of said book; and
- 20 converting scanned components of said book into said digital representation.
4. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information comprises the book title.

5. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information comprises the book author.

6. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information comprises the book publisher.

5 7. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information comprises the International Standard Book Number.

8. The method in Claim 1, wherein said book identification information comprises the book publishing date.

9. The method in Claim 1, wherein step d) comprises the step of:

10 acquiring or generating hard copy book production information.

10. The method in Claim 9, wherein said book production information comprises printing information.

11. The method in Claim 9, wherein said book production information comprises binding information.

12. The method in Claim 1, wherein step d) further comprises the step of:  
via a Raster Image Processor, creating a bitmap of the book block.

13. The method in Claim 1, wherein step d) further comprises the step of:  
via a Raster Image Processor, creating a bitmap of the book cover.

14. The method in Claim 1, wherein step d) further comprises the step of:  
20 acquiring or generating hard copy book production information.

15. The method in Claim 1, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises security information.

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16. The method in Claim 1, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises viewing capabilities.

17. The method in Claim 1, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises printing capabilities.

5 18. The method in Claim 1 wherein step e) comprises for electronic books, the step of:

providing access to said book via an electronic link.

19. The method in Claim 1 wherein step e) comprises for electronic books, the step of:

10 delivering said book to a predefined destination.

20. A print-on-demand system for creating and reproducing books by heterogeneous reproduction workflows, said system comprising:

a book file generator adapted to generate a digital representation of a book targeted for reproduction;

15 a solution-independent converter adapted to convert said book files to have a solution-independent, intermediate format;

a book file memory adapted to store solution-independent, intermediate formatted book files along with book identification information as a mastered book;

20 a solution-dependent converter adapted to convert solution-independent, intermediate formatted book files to solution-dependent formatted book files to match the needs of a book reproduction workflow utilized; and

a book reproducer adapted to reproduce said book from information comprised by said solution-dependent formatted book files.

21. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book in step a) is originally in the form of electronic files.

5 22. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book in step a) is originally in the form of a hard copy, and said book file generator further comprises:

a book scanner adapted to scan the components of said book; and

a scanned component converter adapted to convert scanned components of said book into said digital representation.

10 23. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information comprises the book title.

24. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information comprises the book author.

15 25. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information comprises the book publisher.

26. The method in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information comprises the International Standard Book Number.

27. The system in Claim 20, wherein said book identification information comprises the book publishing date.

20 28. The system in Claim 20, wherein said solution-dependent converter comprises:

a book production information generator adapted to generate hard copy book production information.

29. The system in Claim 28, wherein said book production information comprises printing information.

5 30. The system in Claim 28, wherein said book production information comprises binding information.

31. The system in Claim 20, wherein said solution-dependent converter comprises:

a Raster Image Processor adapted to create a bitmap of the book block.

10 32. The system in Claim 20, wherein step d) further comprises the step of:

a Raster Image Processor adapted to create a bitmap of the book cover.

33. The system in Claim 20, wherein said solution-dependent converter comprises:

a book production information generator adapted to generate hard copy book production information.

34. The system in Claim 20, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises security information.

35. The system in Claim 20, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises viewing capabilities.

20 36. The system in Claim 20, wherein for electronic books, said book production information comprises printing capabilities.

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37. The system in Claim 20 wherein said book reproducer comprises for electronic books:

an electronic link adapted to provide access to said book.

38. The system in Claim 20 wherein said book reproducer comprises for  
5 electronic books:

an electronic link adapted to deliver said book to a predefined destination.

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